

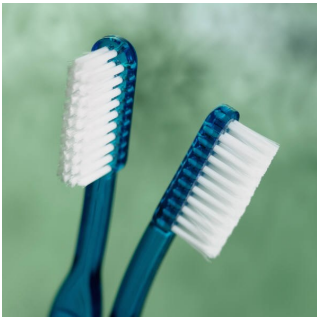
What happens if a person has Hepatitis C?

It depends on many things, including a person's age, health and use of drugs or alcohol. Some people have health problems within a few years of getting infected. Other people live with Hepatitis C for 20 to 30 years without serious health problems. But, over time, the virus can hurt the liver.

Why are adults in correctional facilities at risk for Hepatitis C?

Many people who enter jails or prisons have Hepatitis C. The most common way inmates get Hepatitis C is by sharing equipment used for injecting drugs, tattooing and piercing with other people who are already infected. The virus can be spread easily to others through blood, even in amounts too small to see.

All facilities have different services available. If you feel you are at risk check to see what services are available to you.



Bleaching, boiling, burning or using common cleaning fluids, alcohol or peroxide will not clean needles, tools and other instruments. These methods are not strong enough to kill the Hepatitis C virus. The virus can still spread easily from one person to another.

Stay Healthy with Hepatitis C

- See your health care provider
- Get vaccinated for Hepatitis A & B
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Don't drink alcohol or do drugs
- Learn as much as you can on hepatitis

For more information

Call your health care provider, your local health department or contact



www.health.mo.gov/hepatitisc
www.cdc.gov/hepatitis

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
Section for Disease Prevention
P.O. Box 570

Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570
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Past or present

Hepatitis C and Incarceration

What You Need to Know

1 in 3 individuals in prison or jail have Hepatitis C.

What is Hepatitis?

“Hepatitis” means inflammation of the liver. The liver is an important organ that helps the body digest food, clean blood and fight germs.

Hepatitis is most often caused by a virus. There are three common types of viral hepatitis: Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. They are all different from each other and are spread from one person to another in different ways. Hepatitis C is the most common type of hepatitis in the United States. Many people have the virus and don’t even know it because they do not feel sick. It is also the most common type in jails and prisons.

How is Hepatitis C (HCV) spread?

It is spread when the blood from someone who is infected with HCV enters the body of someone who is not infected. Examples are:

Blood: The Hepatitis C virus can be in blood spills, droplets and blood splatters outside the body. The virus can also survive in dried blood for days. Whenever contact is made with surfaces, equipment or objects that have infected blood on them—even in amounts too small to see—the virus can spread to others. This can include getting into fights and also sharing personal items such as razors, toothbrushes and nail clippers. Any individual who received a blood transfusion before 1992 is also at risk.

Drugs: Most people get the Hepatitis C virus from an infected person when sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs (it can be transmitted through sharing cookers, cottons, water and also straws or dollars for snorting drugs).

You cannot get Hepatitis C by casual contact such as hugging, kissing or sharing food or drink.

Tattoos: The Hepatitis C virus and other diseases can be spread when tattoo, piercing or cutting equipment has tiny amounts of blood on it. Many people get tattoos, piercings or other marks while incarcerated. When they share any equipment or even the ink or water containers, it is easy for people to spread the virus and become infected.

Sex: The Hepatitis C virus can be spread through sex, although this does not happen very often. The virus seems to be more easily spread through sex when a person also has HIV or an STD. People who have rough sex or many sex partners seem to get Hepatitis C more often.

